

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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TAGS: MARR, IS, LE, JO

SUBJ: UNTSO-ARRANGED TRUCE ON LEBANESE BORDER

1. IN COURSE OF MY FAREWELL CALL ON UNTSO CHIEF OF STAFF
MAJOR GENERAL LILJESTRAND JUNE 11 HE DESCRIBED UNTSO EFFORTS
DURING PAST HALF YEAR TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A FORM OF
TRUCE ON ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER (PLEASE PROTECT INFORMATION
FULLY). SINCE ARRANGEMENT IS STILL IN EFFECT, AND SINCE
UNTSO ROLE WAS ONE I, AT LEAST, HAD NOT BEEN FULLY AWARE
OF, DESCRIPTION MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO ADDRESSEES.

2. WHEN OLIVE HARVEST TRUCE IN HASBANIA AREA WAS EXPIRING,
UNTSO PROPOSED, AND RECEIVED NEW YORK AGREEMENT, TO ATTEMPT
SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT FOR LONGER-TERM BASIS. THEIR ORIGINAL
THOUGHT WAS TO BEGIN WITH LIMITED AREA AND THEN EXPAND
ALONG WHOLE BORDER, BUT LEBANESE AND ISRAELIS WERE PREPARED
TO TRY TRUCE FOR ENTIRE BORDER IN ONE STEP.

3. IN SERIES OF MEETINGS AROUND FIRST OF THE YEAR WITH
LEBANESE CHIEF OF STAFF GHANEM AND ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER
PRRES, LILJESTRAND OUTLINED ARRANGEMENT ALONG FOLLOWING
LINES: LEBANESE WOULD TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE
THAT FEDAYEEN CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITY WAS KEPT TO ABSOLUTE
MINIMUM. ISRAELIS, IN TURN, WOULD UNDERTAKE TO REFRAIN

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FROM LARGE-SCALE RETALIATORY SHELLING OF THE SORT THAT

OCCURRED NEW YEAR'S EVE (IT WAS ISRAELI PRACTICE, ACCORDING TO UNTSO, TO ATTACK LARGE REFUGEE COMPLEX AT NABATIYET IN RESPONSE TO FEDAYEEN INCURSIONS ANYWHERE ALONG BORDER). SINCE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR LEBANESE TO CHOK OFF FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY COMPLETELY, ISRAELIS MIGHT HAVE OCCASION TO RESPOND BUT WOULD DO SO LOCALLY AND IMMEDIATELY. BOTH SIDES AGREED, AND LEBANESE ESTABLISHED ADDITIONAL MILITARY POSTS AND PATROLS IN BORDER AREA TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT THEIR SIDE OF BARGAIN. PROCESS OF REACHING AGREEMENT WAS NEARLY DERAILED BY LARGE-SCALE ISRAELI OPERATION AT SHUBA, WHICH BEGAN JANUARY 12, BUT BOTH SIDES ULTIMATLEY AGREED TO GO AHEAD.

4. UNTSO CONSIDERS THAT TRUCE HAS WORKED REASONABLY WELL. THEY FEEL FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY HAS BEEN REDUCED AND NOTE ISRAELI RESTRAINT IN RESPONDING TO THOSE INCIDENTS THAT DO OCCUR. THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT ISRAELI ATTACK ON LEBANESE POST MAY 25 (JERUSALEM 938), PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS POST WAS ONE LEBANESE HAD ESTABLISHED TO HELP CARRY OUT TERMS OF TRUCE. (UNTSO BELIEVES ISRAELI PATROL -- ISRAELIS STILL MAKE PATROLS EVEN UNDER TRUCE ARRANGEMENT -- HAD WANDERED OFF ITS PRESCRIBED ROUTE AND STUMBLED ACCIDENTALLY ON LEBANESE. LEBANESE SENTRY, HEARING MOVEMENT AND BEING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO FIRE ON ANY OTHER ELEMENTS OPERATING IN AREA, OPENED FIRE.)

5. TRUCE ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING KEPT SECRET AT LEBANESE BEHEST, ALTHOUGH ISRAELIS WERE PREAPRED TO PUBLISH THEM. UNSTO ASSUMES THAT PLO AND SYRIA AWARE OF ARRANGEMENTS AND THAT PLO IN FACT IS INFORMALLY COOPERATING.

6. IN COURSE OF MY MEETING WITH LILJESTRAND, UNSTO STAFF ALSO MENTIONED JORDANIAN GOVERNEMNT HAD USED UNTSO GOOD OFFICES IN EFFORT TO GET ISRAELIS TO STOP OVERFLIGHTS OF JORDAN IN RECENT WEEKS. JORDANIANS HAD APPROACHED UNTSO REPRESENTATIVE IN AMMAN AFTER ONE PARTICULARLY DEEP FLIGHT, AND UNTSO HEADQUARTERS HAD TAKEN IT UP WITH ISRAELIS. THEY RECEIVED IMPRESSION THAT OVERFLIGHT WAS INITIATIVE OF SERVICE HEADQUARTERS AND NOT DEFENSE MINISTRY. THERE HAVE BEEN FURTHER OVERFLIGHTS, LESS DEEP AND PROLONGED,

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AND JORDAN HAS APPROACHED UNTSO ON SUSBSEQUENT OCCASIONS. SO FAR AS UNTSO STAFF COULD RECALL, JORDANIANS HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO USE UNTSO IN THIS WAY SINCE 1972. THEY ALSO NOTED IN PASSING THAT ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN MEETING AT LOCAL LEVEL TO DISCUSS PROBLEM RELATED TO MINES AND WATER CHANNEL IN YARMUK AREA.

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